



our neighbor,
an older guy I had a
good relationship
with, ended up
moving away.

During my
second year
of grade
school,



I kept
crying
everyday,

and back
then, I couldn't
understand...

...why my
chest hurt
so much.

HOW'S
KYOUSUKE
DOING?



SAME AS
USUAL.

HE STILL
REFUSES TO
EAT HIS MEALS.
ALL HE DOES
IS CRY.

IT'S
ALREADY
BEEN A
WEEK.

IT'S LIKE HE
FELL IN LOVE
WITH THE GUY.

giggle





**DON'T BE
DISGUSTING.**

I SEE.

SO
THIS IS...



It's a
feeling...

...I've never
felt for anyone
else before.

LIGHTEN UP.
I WAS ONLY
KIDDING.

DON'T
SAY THAT IN
FRONT OF
KYOUSUKE,
EVEN AS A
JOKE.

IT WON'T
BE GOOD IF
HE GETS THE
WRONG IDEA
AND GOES OFF
IN A WEIRD
DIRECTION.

YOU'RE
OVER-
THINKING
THIS.

**"...NOT
RIGHT."**

THIS IS...

I SEE.





Oji!
DON'T IGNORE US.
HEEY.

...



AH.

FWIP

SORRY,
KASUMI...



GIVE IT UP, MAN.
THAT GUY STAYS
COOPED UP IN THE
LIBRARY, READING
BOOKS ALL BY
HIMSELF.

Huh?

He's always
alone and it
looks like
he's free.

THINK HE'D
PLAY SOCCER
WITH US?



OW!

THUNK

DON'T
BADMOUTH
OTHERS
LIKE THAT.



KYOUSUKE,
YOU CAN NEVER
LEAVE A GLOOMY
GUY LIKE HIM
ALONE.

MY MOM
WARNED ME
NOT TO TALK
TO HIM, SO IT'S
BEST IF WE
LEAVE HIM A-

HE LIVES IN A
WORN DOWN
HOUSE BESIDE
THE RIVER, YOU
KNOW?



*T/N: TANABATA IS A JAPANESE HOLIDAY ON JULY 7TH.







THE GUYS
FROM OUR
CLASS ARE
WAITING AT
FIFTH PARK!

LET'S
GO PLAY
SOCCER IF
YOU'RE
FREE!



YOU'RE A
VERY FUNNY
GUY!



HMMM.

WELL,
I'D HATE
THAT.



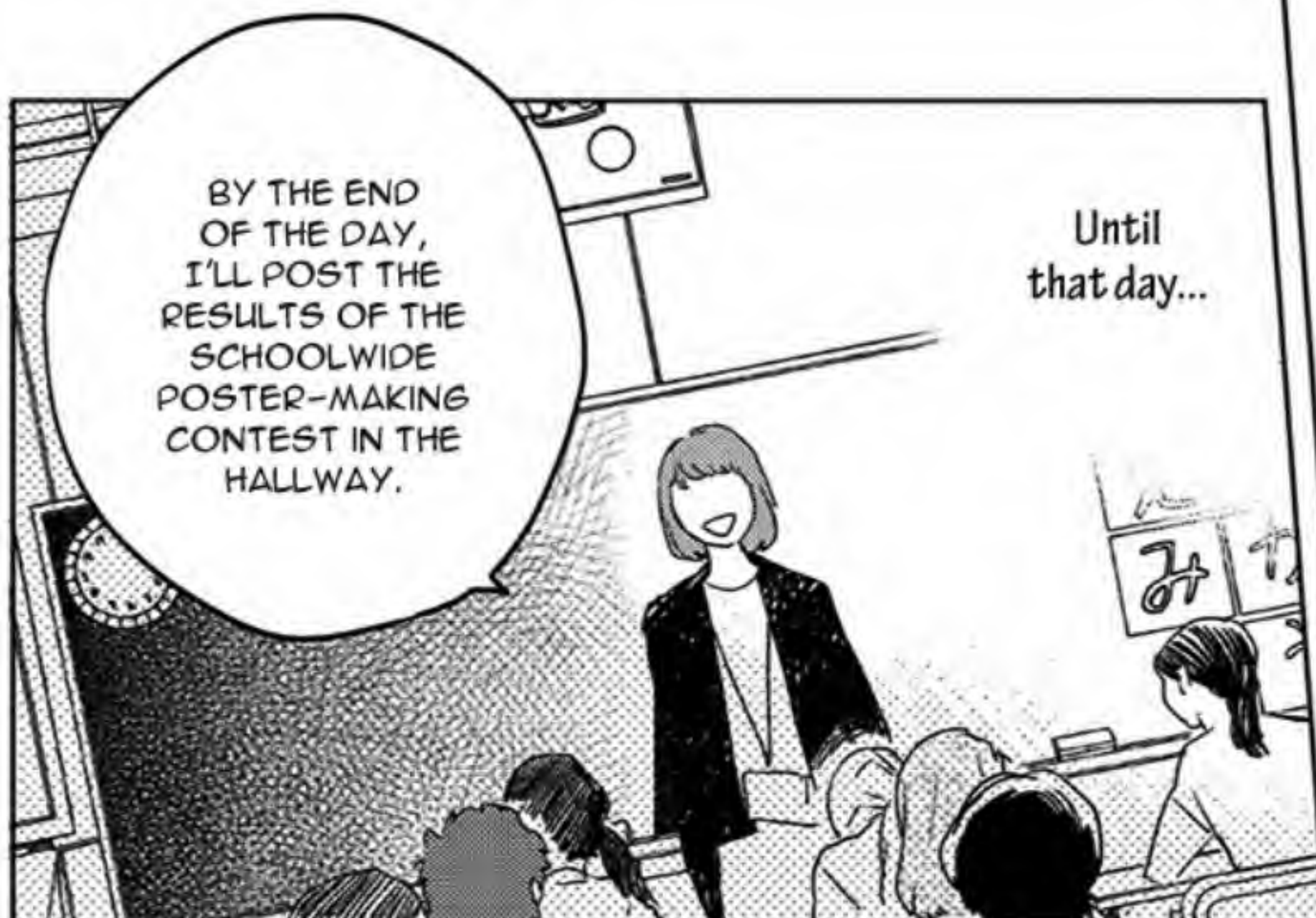
IF YOU
PLAY WITH
ME,

THEY'LL
SAY A LOT
OF THINGS
ABOUT
YOU.



PULL





Until that day...



That's why I kept myself at a certain distance,

to ensure it stayed just a passing thought.





KYOUSUKE
GOT FIRST
PLACE IN
THE RECENT
SCHOOL-
WIDE POSTER
MAKING
CONTEST!

LIKE FATHER,
LIKE SON!



DAD,
LISTEN TO
THIS!



STOP
REJOICING IN
EVERY LITTLE
THING.

IT'S A GIVEN
HE'D WIN A
SIMPLE SCHOOL
CONTEST.



GRIT

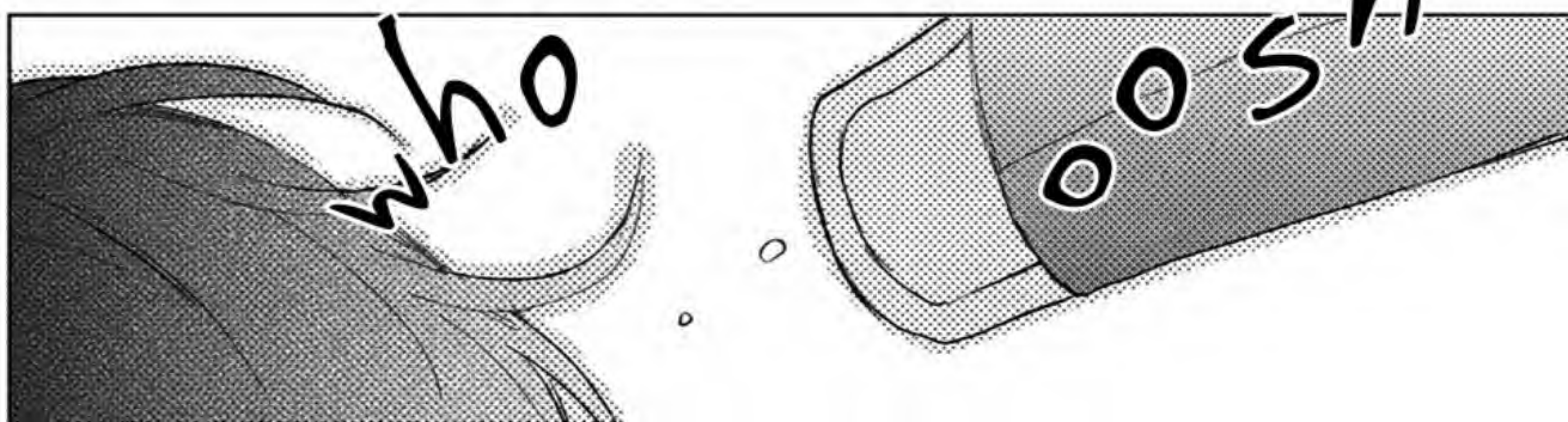








After that,
like tumbling
down a hill...



We chose the
same middle and
high school,

and went
to separate
colleges.

But I can still
use my position
as his friend...



YOU DON'T
HAVE TO USE
THE HAIR
DRYER.

YOU'LL
SLEEP WITH
YOUR HAIR
WET, IF I
DON'T.



I END UP
BEING AN
ADDITIONAL
BURDEN TO
YOU.

BUT
BECAUSE
I'M
SLOPPY,



I KNOW
YOU'RE OVER-
LOADED WITH
SCHOOL WORK
IN AN ARTS
COLLEGE,

FOR
WHAT?



...to be the
one closest
to him.

I KINDA
FEEL
SORRY.





I DON'T
REALLY FEEL
LIKE HANGING
OUT WITH
OTHERS...



I'M NOT
GOING ANY-
WHERE.

LET'S
HANG
OUT,

ONCE
YOU'RE FREE
OF SCHOOL-
WORK,



HMM...



Kasumi
and I won't
be together
forever.



YOU KEEP
THE DRYER
HERE,
RIGHT?

That's
precisely why I
want to make
every second
count.



Oh.
THANKS.

Now
it's dry.

THERE,
IT'S DONE.

CLICK

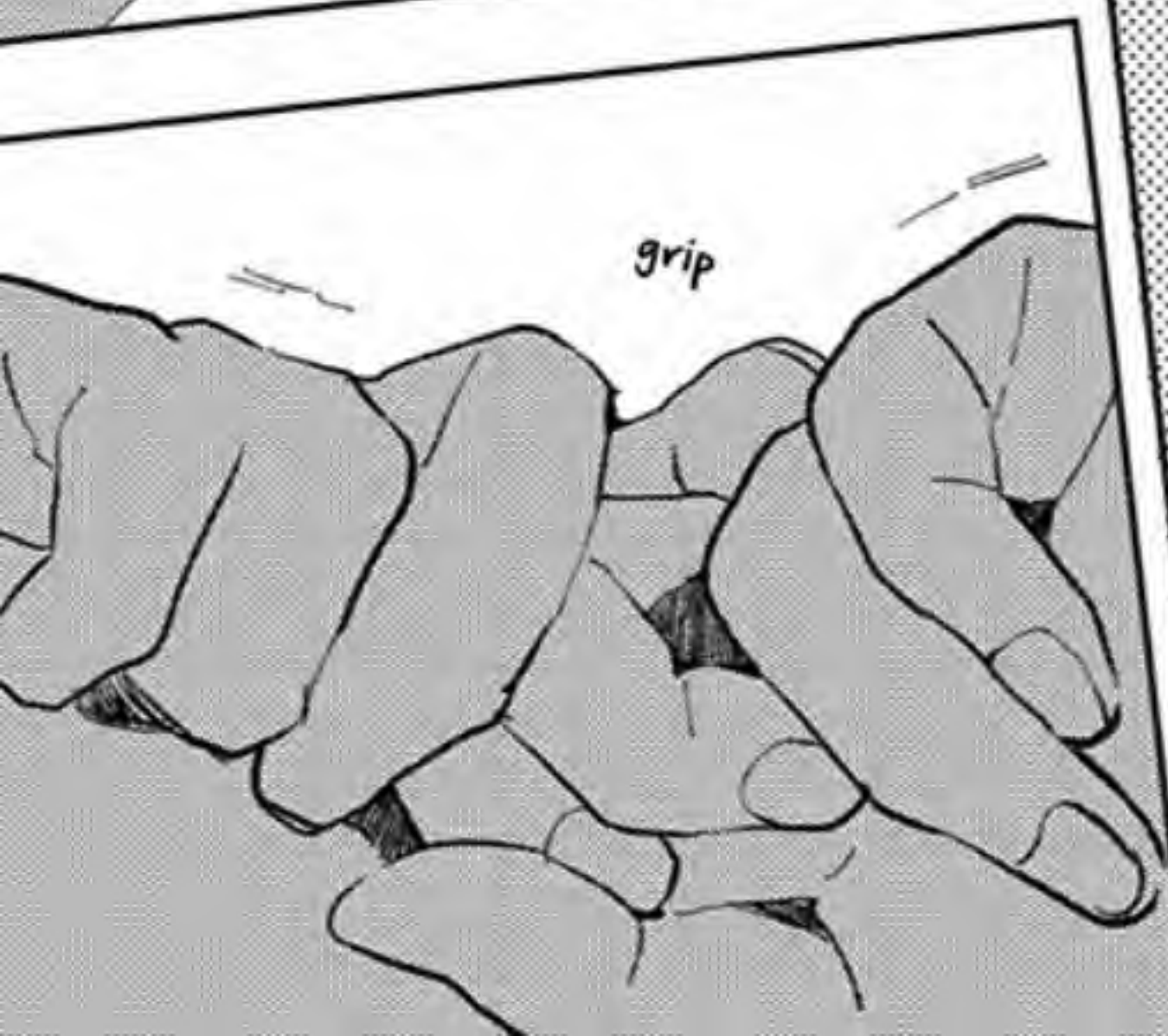
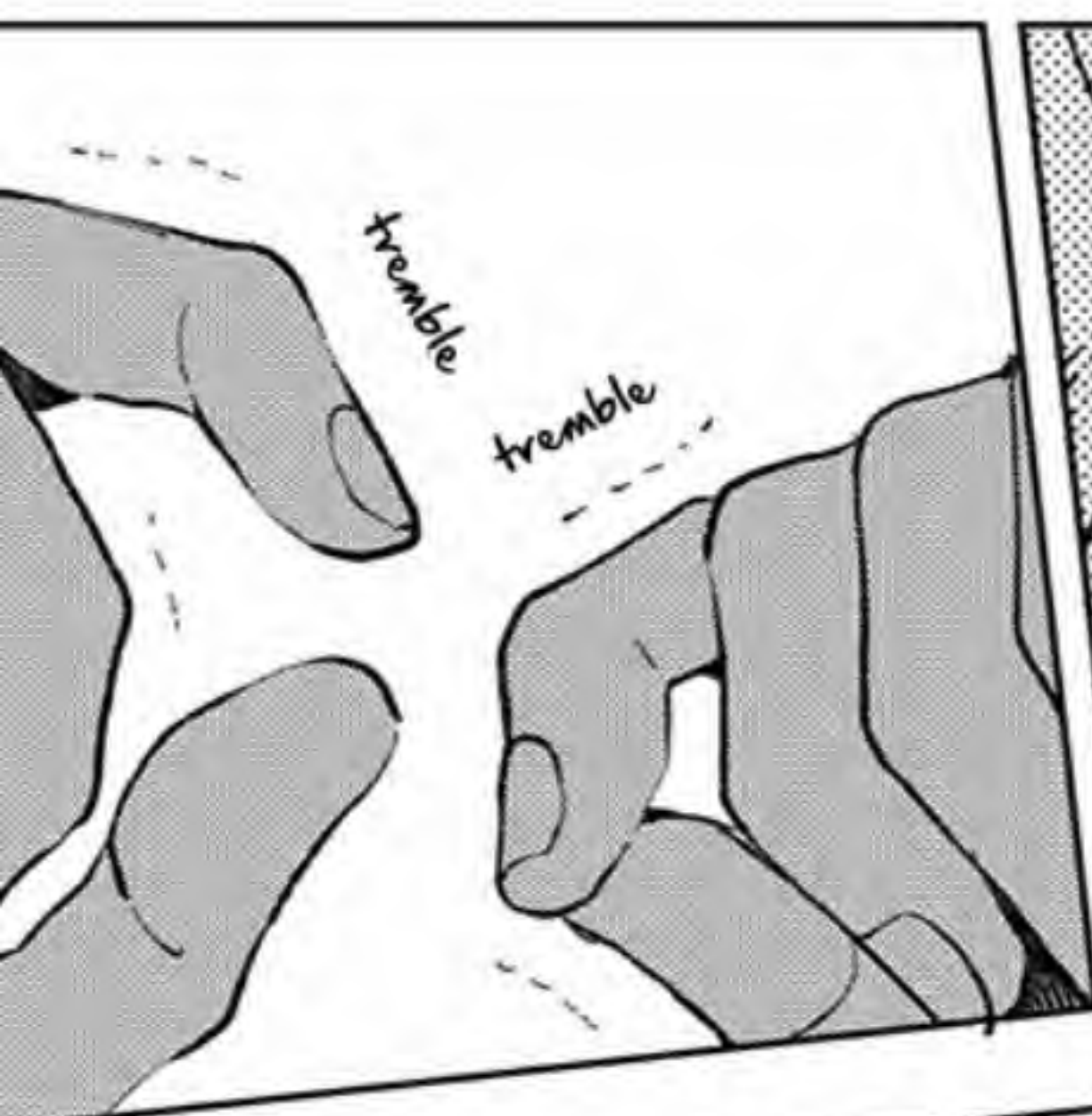








I LOVE YOU.

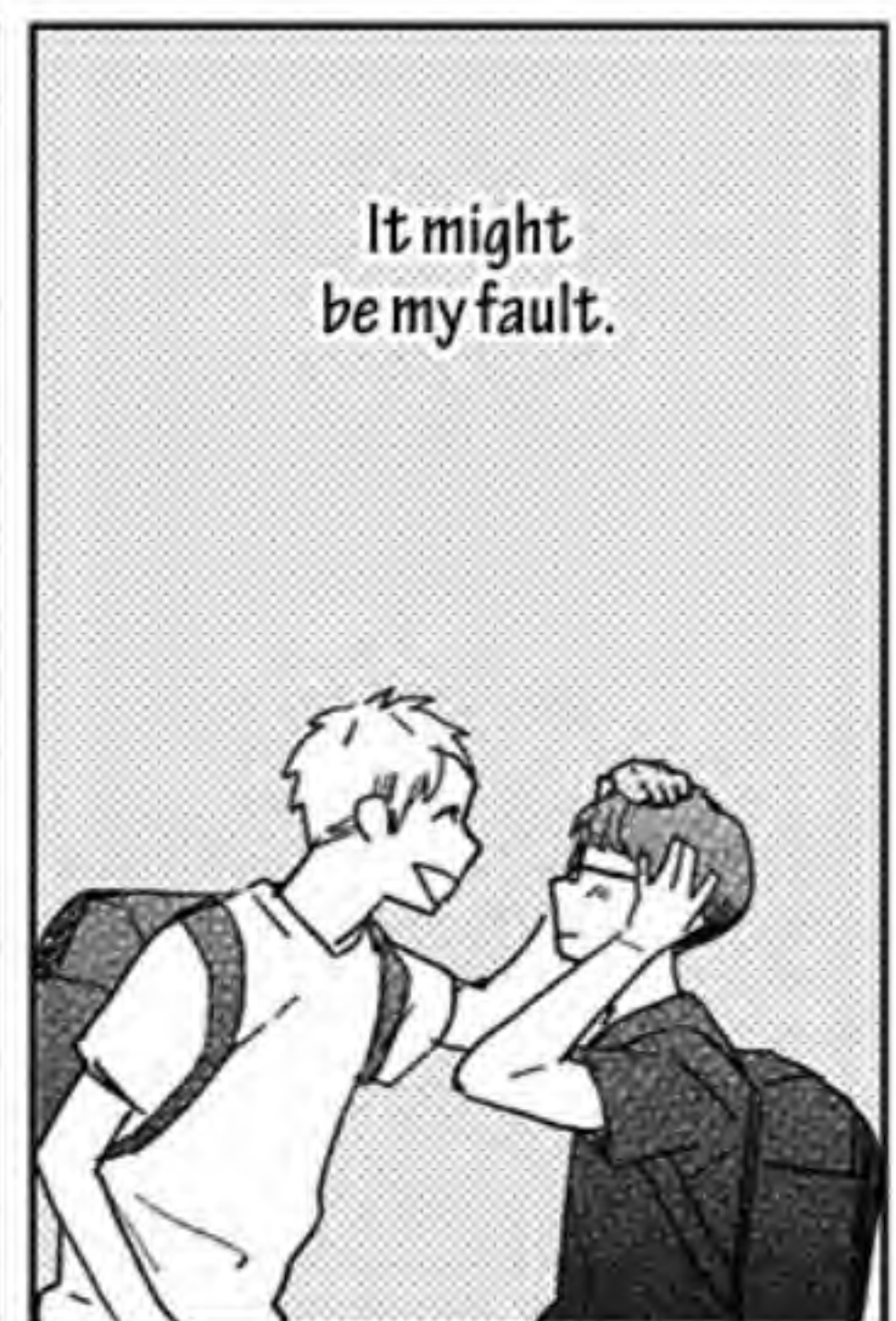




...
KYOUSUKE,

I
LOVE
YOU...

bluuush





After all,
this is...



That's
definitely
the reason.

“NOT RIGHT.”



KASUMI,

YOU DON'T
LOVE ME.

IT'S ALL A
MISUNDER-
STANDING.



He'll
properly meet
a woman,

they'll love
one another,

and be
happy.



If I took a step
back, I'm sure
he'll come to
understand.

That's
what I
believed.



I'M SORRY
ABOUT THE
OTHER DAY.



BEING A
MARRIED
WOMAN...

...IS ONLY
ONE FACET
TO HER.



BUT, I...

NO MATTER
WHAT ANYONE
SAYS, I LOVE
YURIKO-SAN*.



I GOT TOO
EMOTIONAL.

EVEN
THOUGH
YOU WERE
ONLY
LOOKING
OUT FOR
ME,

*T/N: SORRY, I MADE A MISTAKE IN CHI.
IT'S YURIKO, NOT RIKAKO.

infidelity is
unproductive,
pointless, a
complete waste
of time.

For the
"happiness"
Kasumi had
in mind,

I WANT
YOU TO UNDER-
STAND.



Deep down, I can
tell Kasumi knows
that for a fact.

AFTER ALL,
IT'S GOING WELL
FOR YOU.



YEAH.

I DO.



Until Kasumi
realizes that
himself,

I want to
remain by
his side.



COME HERE
FOR A BIT.

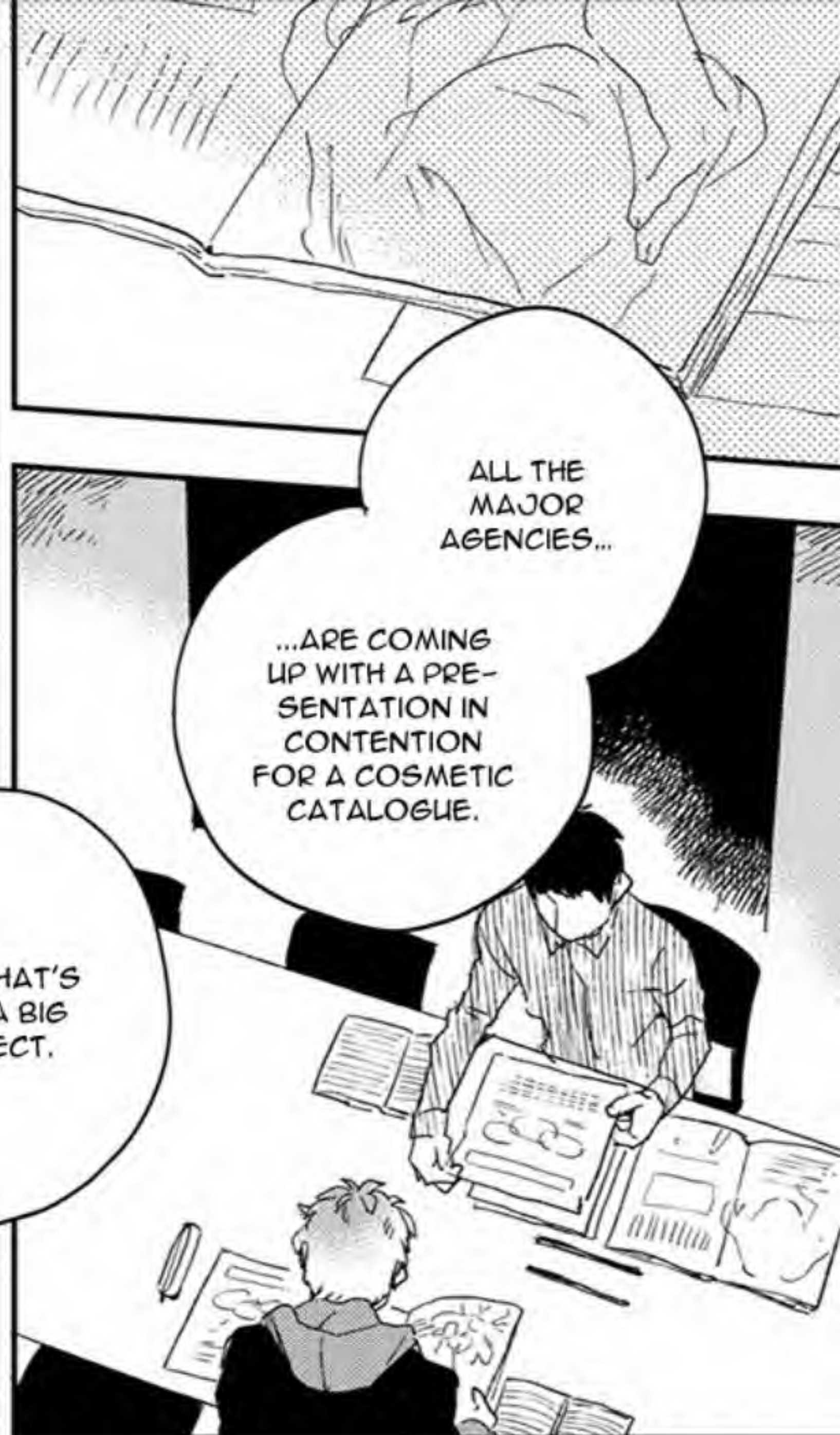
SHINA,



WOULD YOU LIKE
TO OVERSEE THIS
PROJECT AS ITS
DIRECTOR?

My mom's
been a
long-time
user of this
brand.

WOW, THAT'S
QUITE A BIG
PROJECT.



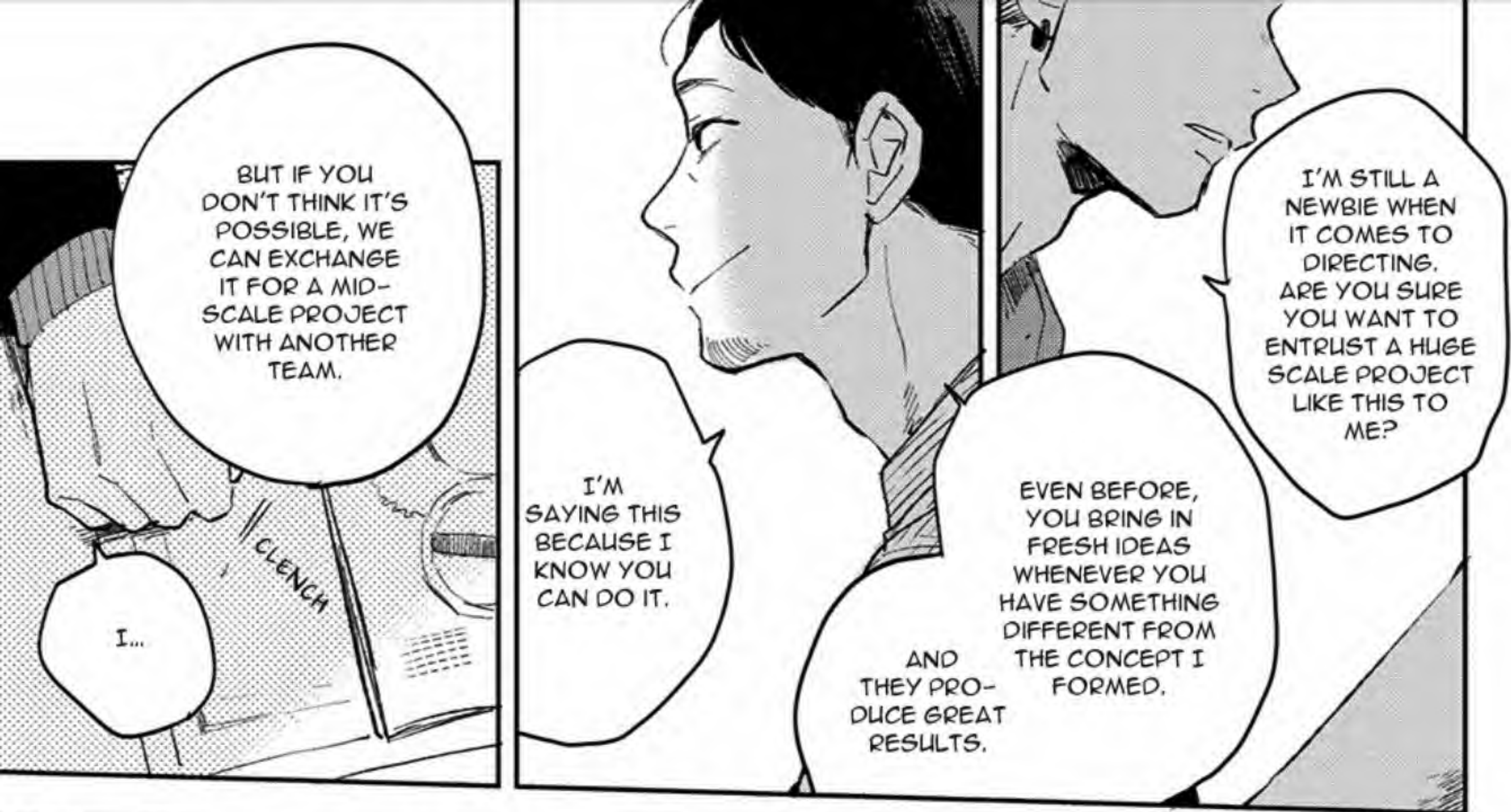
ALL THE
MAJOR
AGENCIES...

...ARE COMING
UP WITH A PRE-
SENTATION IN
CONTENTION
FOR A COSMETIC
CATALOGUE.



SO I'D LIKE
TO ENTRUST ITS
DIRECTORSHIP
TO YOU.

YOU'VE
ALREADY
ACCUMULATED A
CONSIDERABLE
AMOUNT OF EX-
PERIENCE AS A
DESIGNER.







BUT THE PROBLEM'S HOW TO APPLY IT...

I PRETTY MUCH HAVE AN IDEA WHERE THE CONCEPT IS GOING,

I'M BEAT...

PULLING AN ALL-NIGHTER AND CATCHING THE LAST TRAIN FOR TWO WEEKS STRAIGHT, IS TOUGH AS EXPECTED...



...
I WANT TO SEE KASUMI.



AMEIYA KASUMI

I STILL HAVEN'T GOTTEN A REPLY...

...TO MY MESSAGE THE OTHER NIGHT.



That's enough for me.

We'll meet, talk about trivial stuff, and have a laugh together.




I want to touch him. Kiss him.

But I can't afford to say such absurdity.







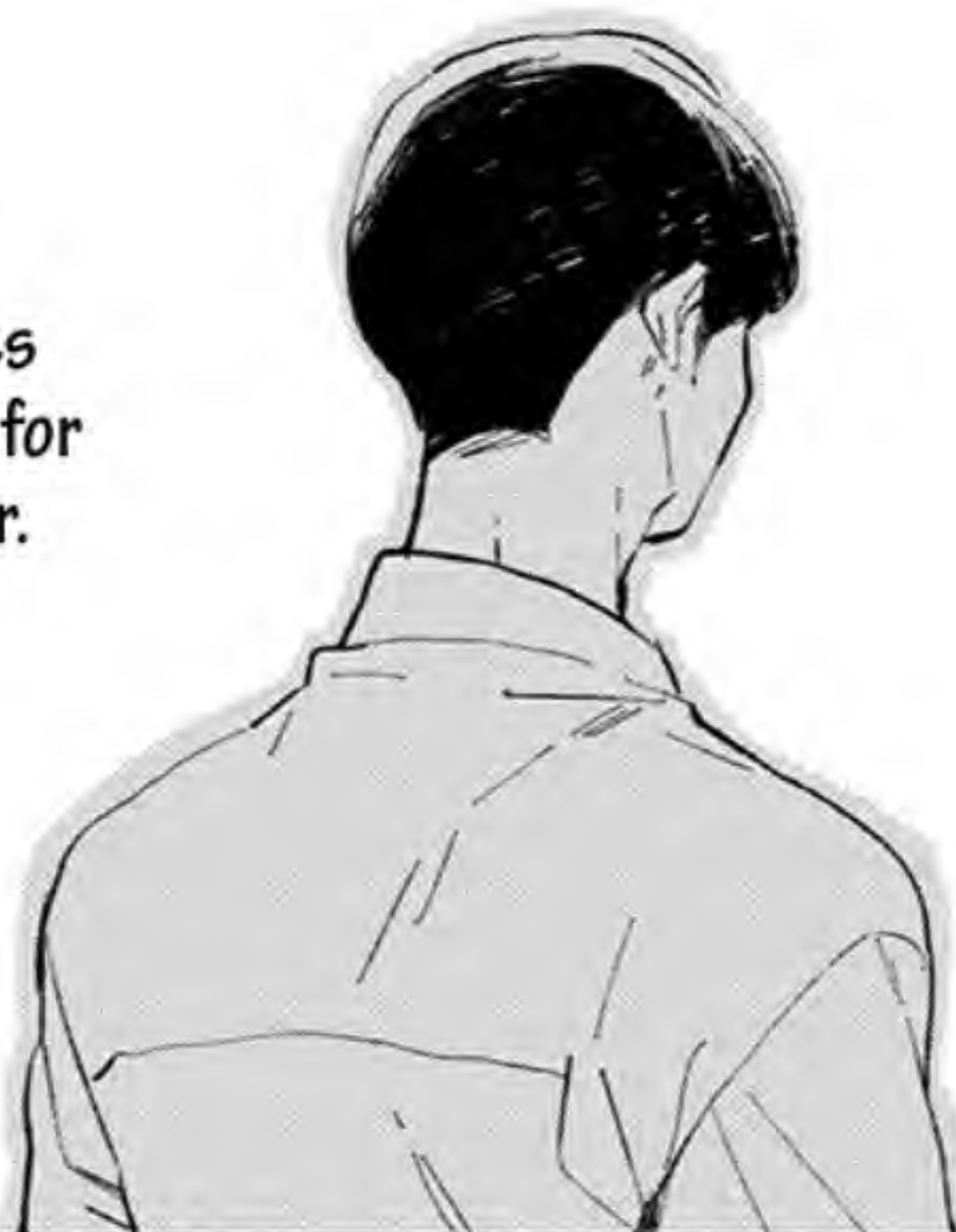
Tell me,
Kasumi.

What
do I have
to do...

...for you
to become
happy?



My parents
held no love for
each other.



I'M
SORRY...

clack

YOUR FATHER
WILL SKIN ME
ALIVE IF YOU
DON'T GET IT
TOGETHER!

GOOD GOD,
KASUMI!
WHY CAN'T
YOU DO
SOMETHING
THIS
SIMPLE?!

and expected
the same level
of excellence
from his son.

My father,
with his high
academic
achievement,
was prideful,



IF NOT FOR
THIS KID, THEN
I WOULDN'T BE
STUCK IN THIS
WRETCHED
MARRIAGE!

HOW
DARE
YOU!

IT'S YOUR
IDIOTIC
GENES TO
BLAME.

KASUMI,
YOU CAN'T GO
A DAY WITHOUT
SCREWING UP.



I promise
myself...

...I'll spend
it with the
person I
truly love.

If I
have to
live my
life with
some-
body,



...took me,
the abandoned
kid, in.

Unable to
just stand by
and watch,
my maternal
grandmother...

My parents
had a divorce due
to their extreme
incompatibility.

03







and was somebody who stood out from the rest of us the entire school year.

He excelled in both academics and sports, Shiina Kyouusuke and I were in different classes until fourth grade.





YOU'RE
NOT HURT
ANYWHERE,
ARE YOU?

YOU
ALRIGHT?

KASUMI,
IT'S YOU.

WHAT DO
YOU THINK
YOU'RE
DOING?

Simple as
things are,
trust me to
screw it up.

I'm always
like this.



and self-
confident.

Kyouusuke
is dazzling,

popular,

My polar
opposite.

SNATCH

Mingling with others means pushing them to the brink of exasperation.



"WHAT A
HUGE
KLUTZ!"



If I could
become
even a bit
like him,



then maybe my
mother wouldn't
have been so
hysterical,

and maybe
I wouldn't
have been
abandoned.

Nothing
ventured,
nothing gained

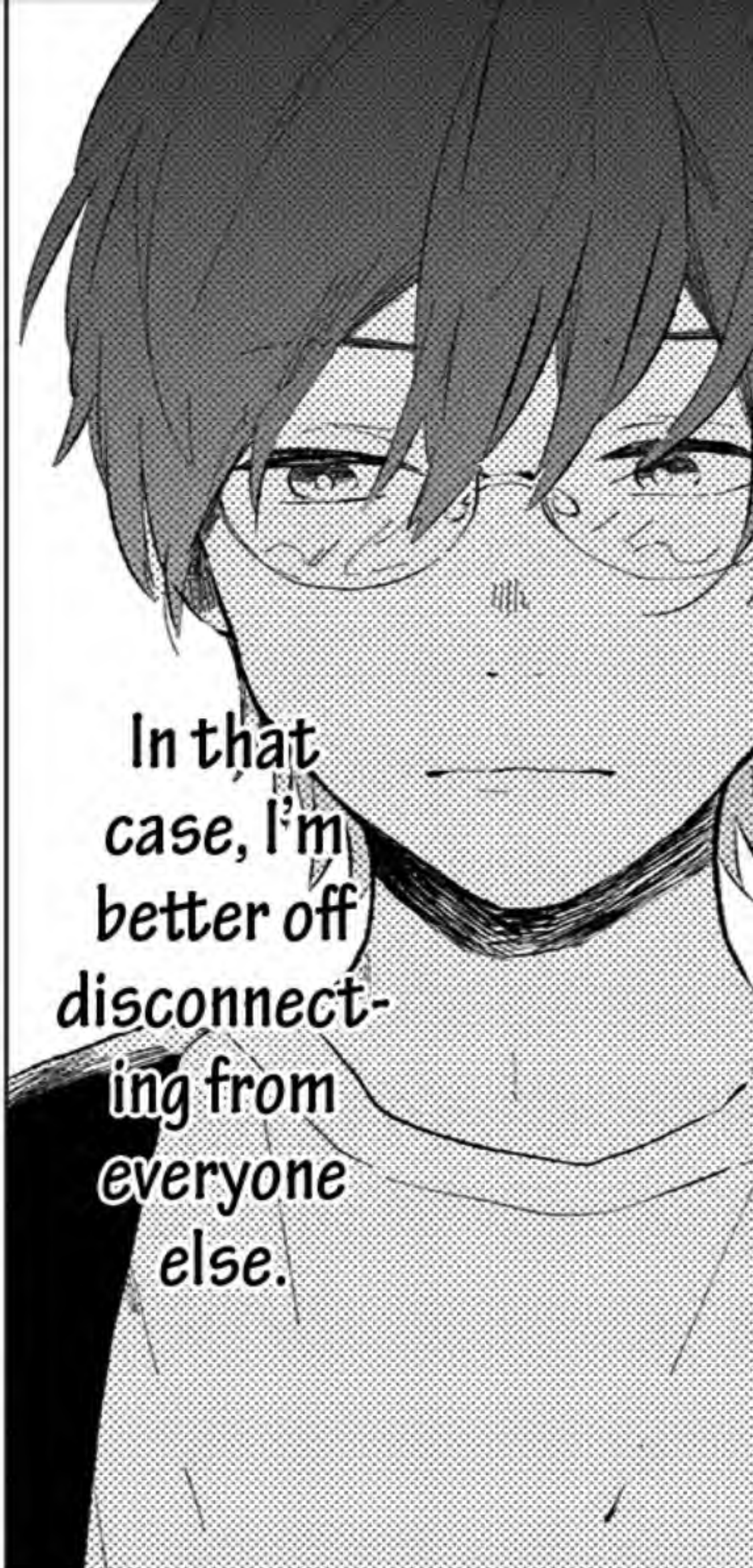
All they had
to do was take
one look at my
stupid self and
they'd hate me.



"WHY ARE
YOU SO
USELESS?"



Being alone
is easier.



In that
case, I'm
better off
disconnect-
ing from
everyone
else.



WELCOME
BACK,

KASUMI-
CHAN.

... I'M BACK.

close

THUNK

THUNK

THUNK

whisper
whisper



I wish
to marry
the person
I love
and be
happy.





... NOBODY'S
LOOKING,
RIGHT?



THIS IS
IDIOTIC...



Not like I
believe this
wish would
ever be
fulfilled.

I wish
to marry
the person
I love
and be
happy.

OH!

THAT'S
A CUTE
WISH.

BA-DUMP



NO!

THIS IS...!

HE'S
GONNA
MAKE FUN
OF ME...!



THIS
IS THE
WORST.

SHIINA
KYOUSUKE!



WOBBLE



Huh?

IT'S A
GREAT WISH!



He's gonna
think I'm
annoying
this time...

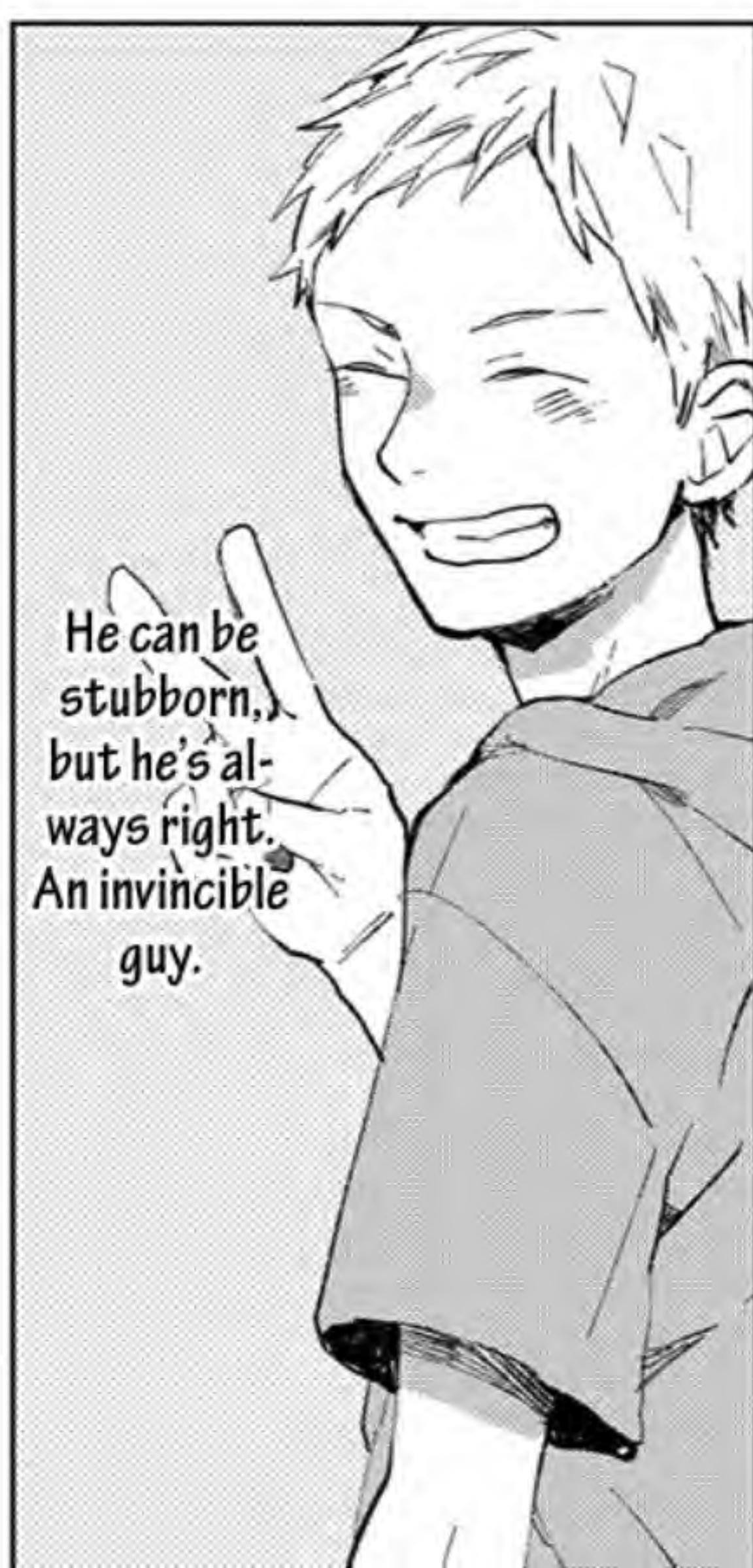
Now I've
done it.

Pfft!
YOU
OKAY?

THE WAY
YOU FELL
WAS COMIC
BOOK
MATERIAL.

KASUMI?!

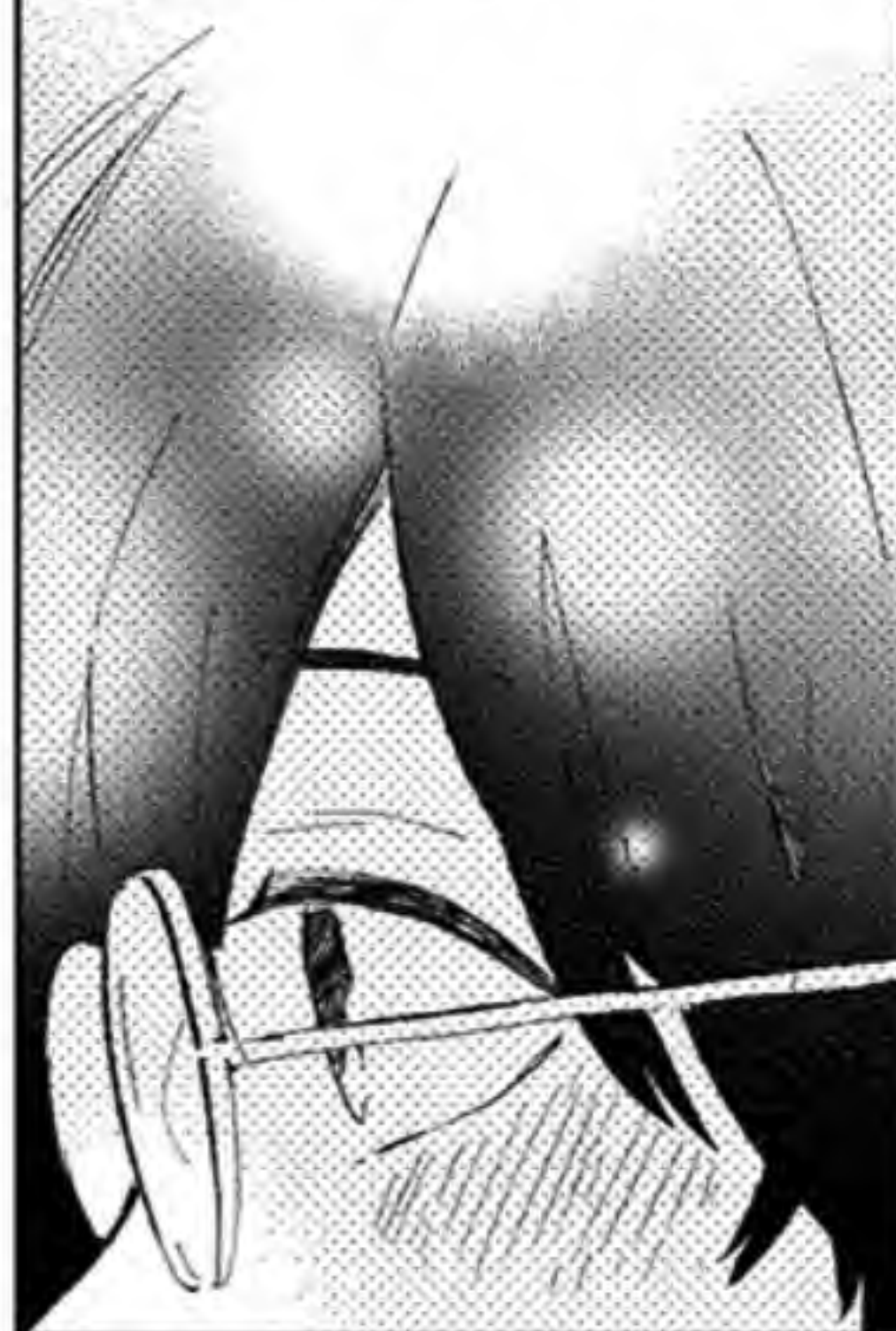
THUD



"WHAT'RE YOU DOING?"

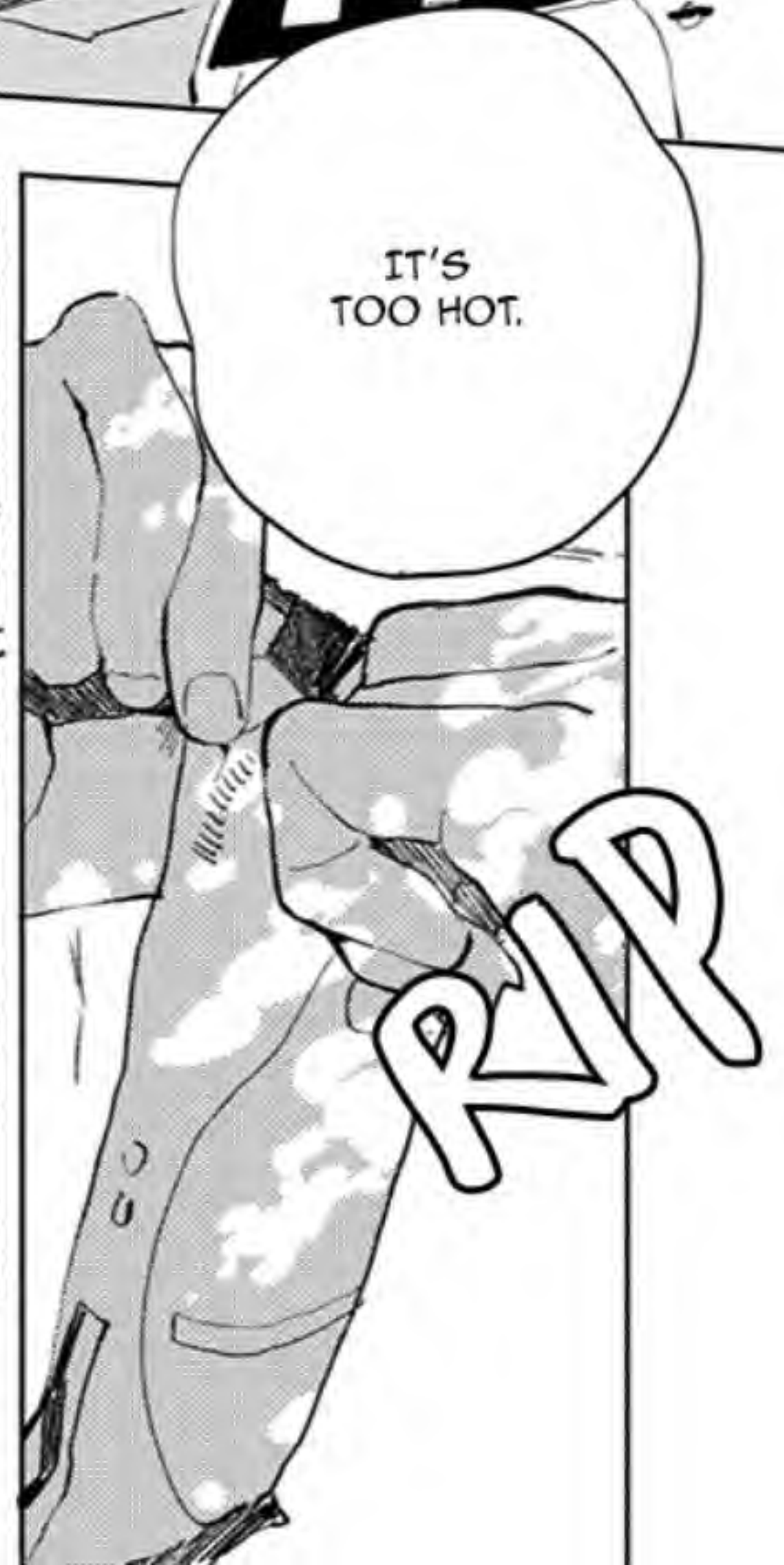


Does he even
have any kind of
weakness...?



That day...
and time and
time again...

Kyousuke showed
me that worrying was
needless anxiety.







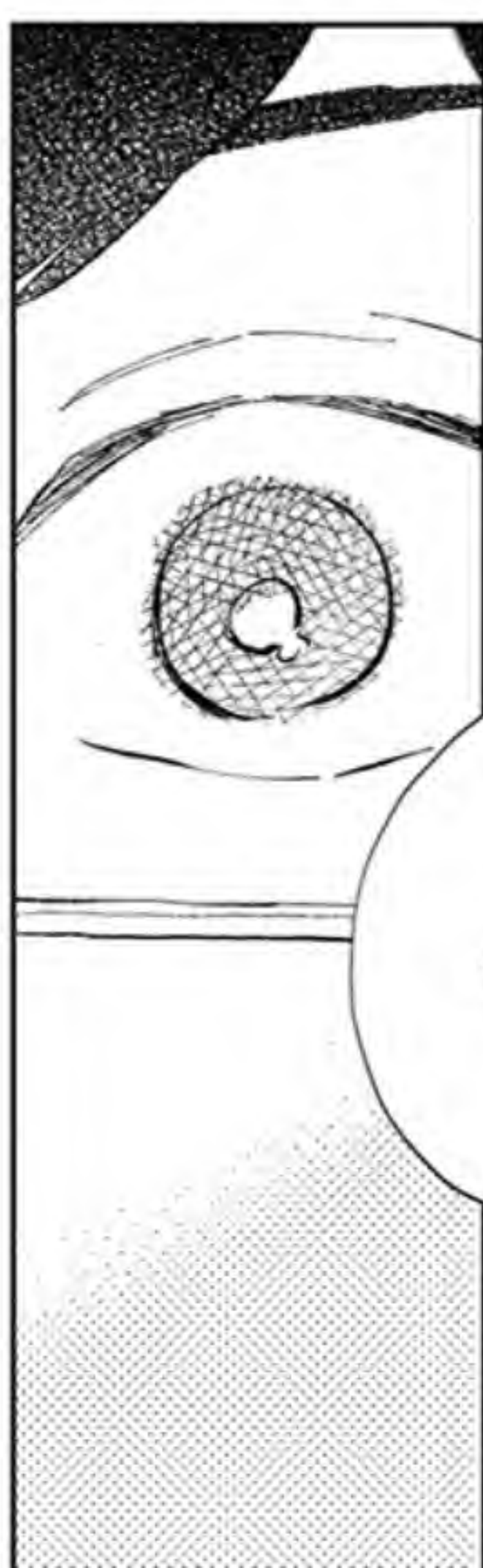




I love you.
I love you.
I love you.



But someday... we'll have to go our separate ways.

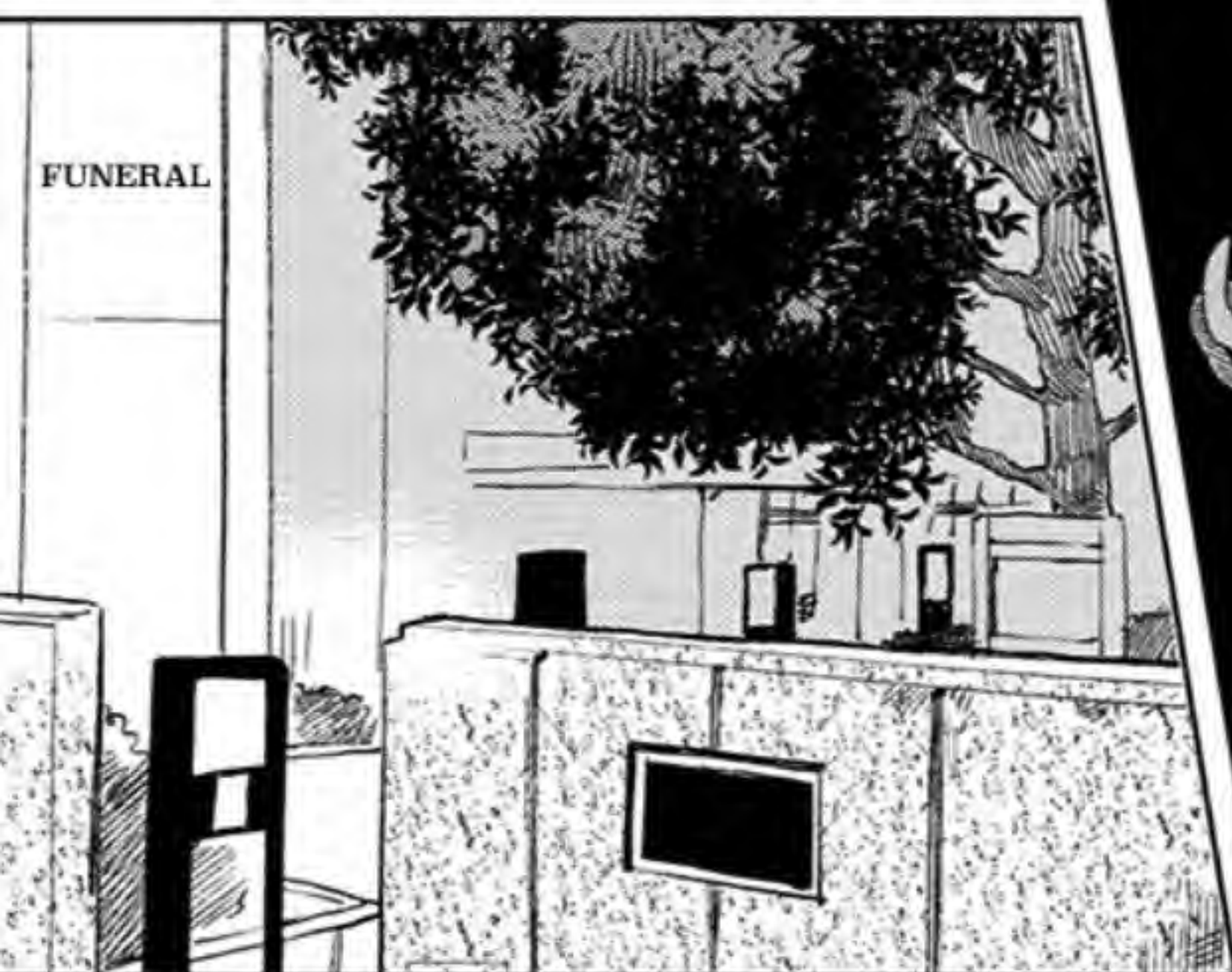
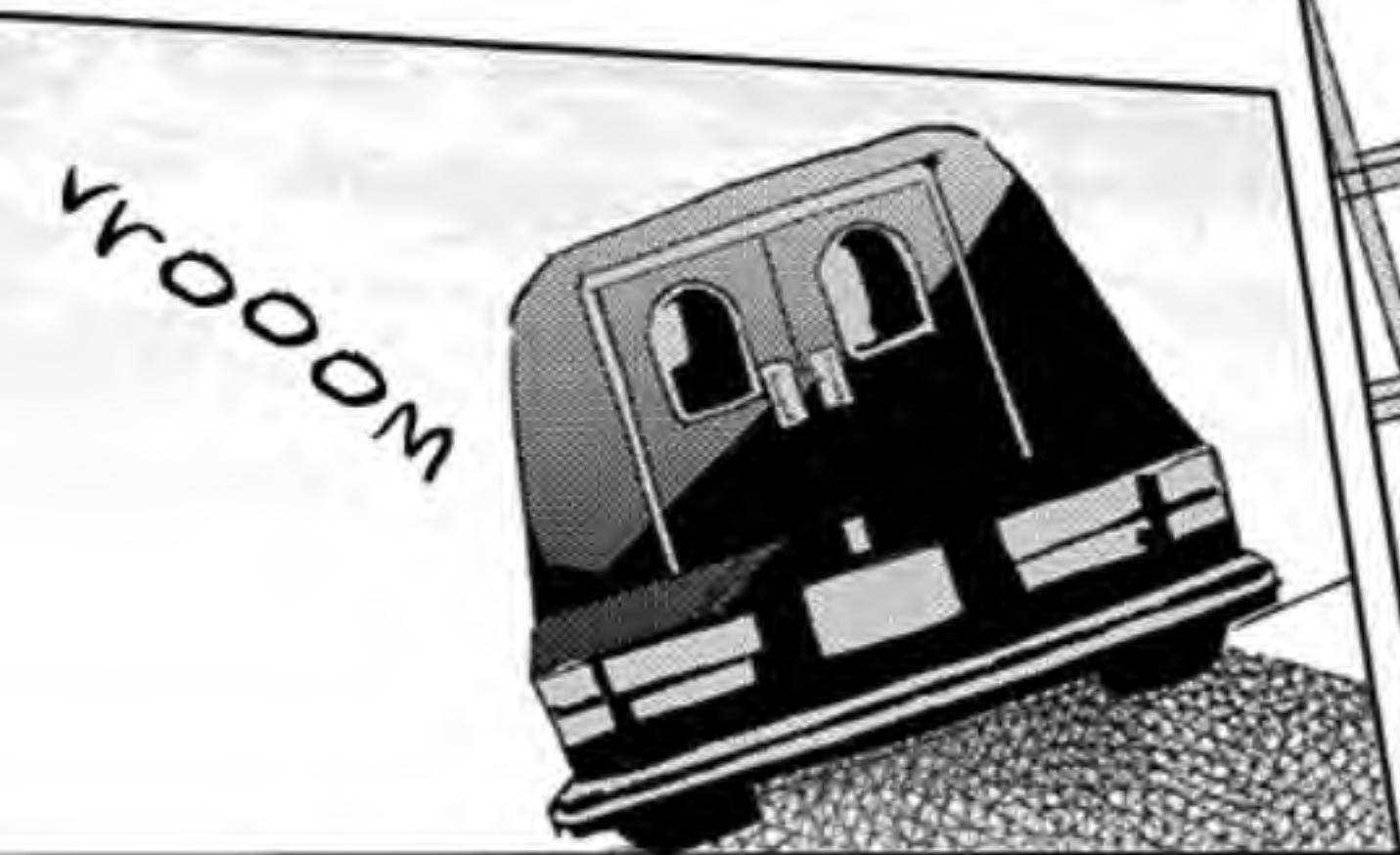


I'M GOING
TO SCHOOL...



GRANDMA,

ARE YOU
STILL
ASLEEP?





may
not be
enough.

Love, as a
definer for
these
feelings,



But that day,
containing
them proved
impossible.

I doubt it'd
ever occur in
this lifetime
again.

To fall so
madly in love
with someone
like this...

He was
always by
my side.



I LOVE YOU.

and spend
the rest of
my life alone.

I've no choice
but to conceal
these feelings
of mine,

Still,
we can't
stay
together.



The words poured right out of me, and I couldn't come up with a sad excuse in time.



If these
feelings are
not love, then
what are
they?

Love, to fall
in love with
somebody...

What
exactly is
it...?

But
Kyouzuke
is never
wrong.

I DON'T
LOVE HIM...?

I wouldn't
be conceiving
feelings of this
degree for
any random
person.

COULD YOU
FILL IN INSTEAD?
THINK OF IT AS
HELPING A
SENIOR OUT.

BUT THE
PROBLEM IS,
ONE MEMBER
SUDDENLY CAME
DOWN WITH AN
ILLNESS.

ACTUALLY,
WE'RE HEADED
TO A MIXER WITH
THE SECRETARY
LATER.

AMEMIYA-
KUN.

click







That was
Yuriko-san.



KASUMI-
KUN,

YOU WEAR
A LOOK OF
UNFULFILLMENT.



ARE
YOU ALL
RIGHT...?

THAT
DOESN'T
SOUND TOO
BAD.

JUST LIKE ME.

THE TWO OF
US MENDING
EACH OTHER'S
VOIDS...



And
that's all
I cared
about.

I could forget
Kyouzuke
whenever we
met.

But
none of it
mattered,
really.

She told me her
marriage wasn't
smooth-smiling—
her husband was
constantly busy
and they rarely saw
each other.

I learned she
was a married
woman on our
second
meeting.

I sensed
a slight
awkwardness
from him.

The
moment
our eyes
met,

The Kyouzuke
I haven't seen in
a long time was
shining ever so
brightly.

Five years
later, came
our high
school
reunion.



But I figured if I
approached him "as
a friend," then I'd be
permitted a spot
at his side.

I already had
Yuriko-san.



The days I
spent with
Kyouzuke
were fun.

KASUMI!

LONG TIME
NO SEE.

Keeping
them at bay
was tough when
there was hardly
any engagement
between
Yuriko-san
and I.

My chest
would throb
from time to time
whenever my past
feelings would
resurface.



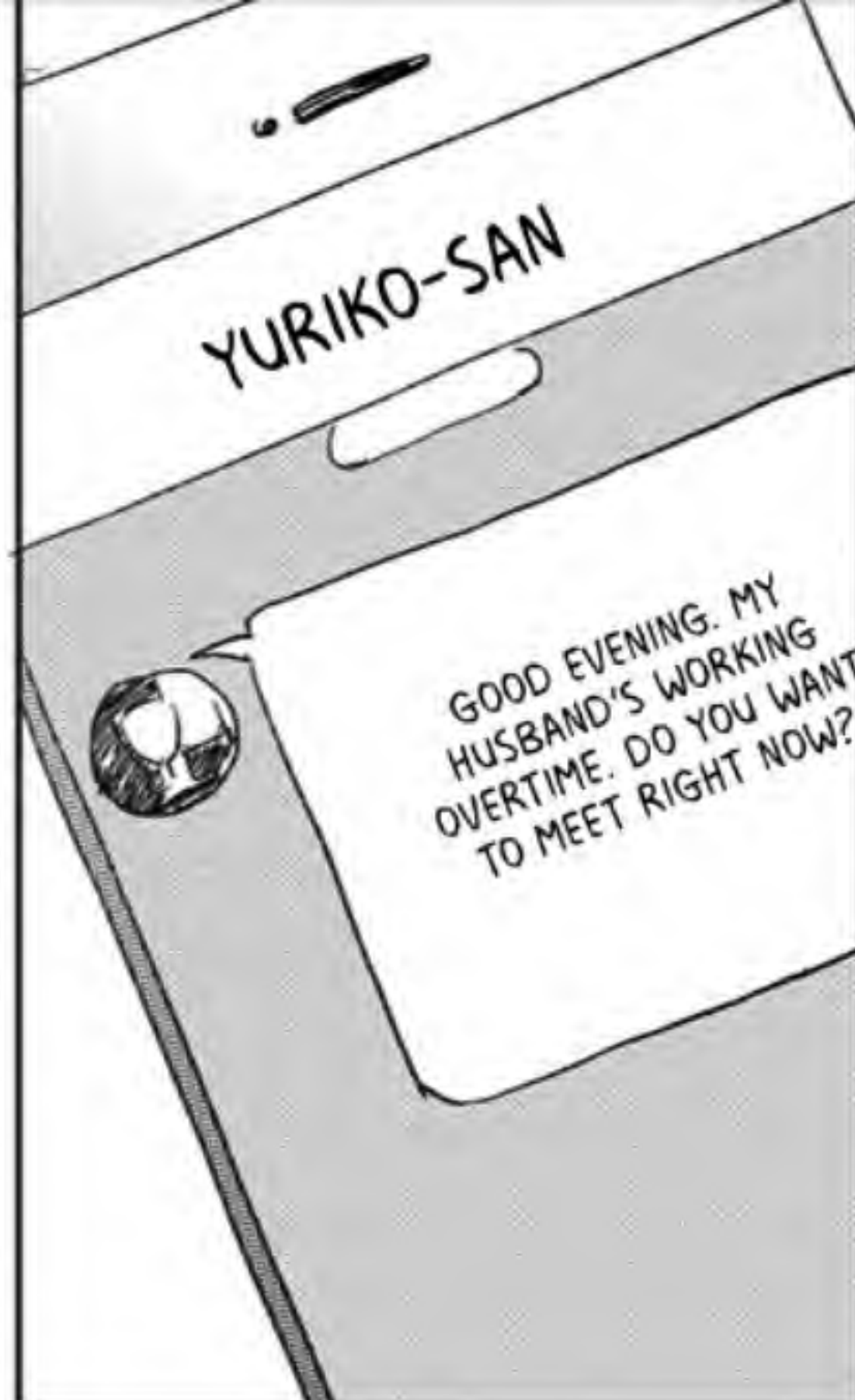
SHIINA KYOUSUKE

I'M DONE.
WHAT ABOUT
YOU?

I'M ON MY
WAY TO YOUR
PLACE.

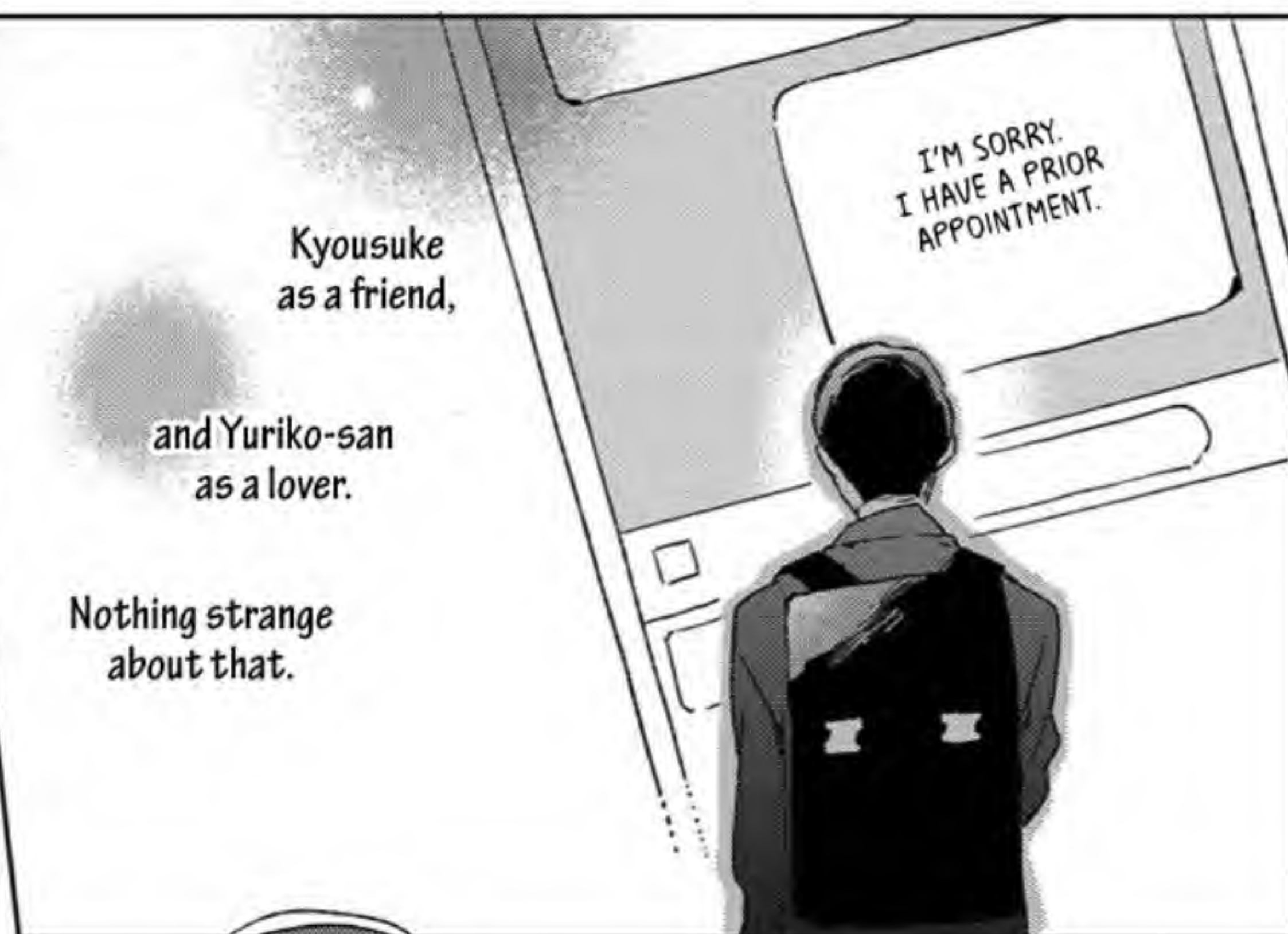
so harboring
feelings of this
nature towards
Kyouzuke, was
not an option.

I already had
Yuriko-san,



or so I thought.

Yuriko-san and I loved each other,



Kyousuke as a friend,

and Yuriko-san as a lover.

Nothing strange about that.



WHAT?



... DON'T
YOU LOVE ME
ANYMORE...?



CLATTER

THAT'S
NOT IT.

WHAT... WHY?
AREN'T YOU
HAPPY WITH
THIS TRIP?



LIKE I
SAID,

I THINK WE
SHOULD END
THIS.



THERE
IS A VOID
WITHIN US.

I HAD
THOUGHT THAT
IF WE KEPT EACH
OTHER CLOSE,
THERE WAS A
CHANCE AT
MENDING IT.

BUT IN
THE END,
THE VOID
REMAINED
A VOID...



I DO
LOVE YOU.

JUST
NOT...

...THE ONE
I LOVE THE
MOST.



WAS I THE ONE
YOU WANTED TO
FILL YOURS...?



WHAT
ABOUT
YOU?



TRUTHFULLY,

THE VOID
WITHIN ME
ACHED FOR
SOMEONE
ELSE...



... MY
THROAT'S...

...PARCHED,

I'M
STARVING...

I despaired...

*...because
those words,
every single one
of them, sank
into my chest.*



FOR ALL
I CARE...

BUT LET
EVERYTHING
BURN,



I want to see
Kyouzuke.



I hoped,
with all my
heart.

open

Can't he...

...pull me out
of this darkness
once more?



CREAK

...!

WHAT...



...HAPPENED?

CLOSE



KASUMI!!

SLAM



... WHY DID YOU COME HERE?



YOU
SHOULD
HAVE...

...TOSSED
SOMEONE
LIKE ME
ASIDE!!!



I BROKE
UP WITH
YURIKO-
SAN.

... KASUMI?



SHE
DIDN'T REALLY
LOVE ME.

SAME
GOES FOR
ME...

I DIDN'T
REALLY LOVE
HER...



I TRIED TO,
AND AROUND
THAT TIME I
MET YURIKO-
SAN.

I WAS
CONVINCED
SHE WAS
THE ONE.

FORGET-
TING ABOUT
YOU...

...WAS
TERRIBLY
DIFFICULT.



THE ONE
I WANTED
TO COME
HERE,

WASN'T
HER...

BUT I WAS
WRONG.



HEY,

KYOUSUKE...



HOW AM I
SUPPOSED
TO...

...MOVE
ON FROM
YOU?



DON'T BE
NICE TO ME,
OKAY?

PUSH ME
CLEANLY
ASIDE,



TREAT ME
COLDLY,

AND THEN
ABANDON
ME.



BECAUSE
IF YOU
DON'T...




pant



I LOVE YOU.





...when I
pushed him
aside.

That day,
in that room,

I hoped for
Kasumi's
happiness...




all that
accomplished
was to tear
him to pieces.

But,
in the end,



"IF YOU'LL
BE IN MISERY ANYWAY,
THEN I WANT TO BE THE
ONE WHO DRAGS YOU
DOWN."

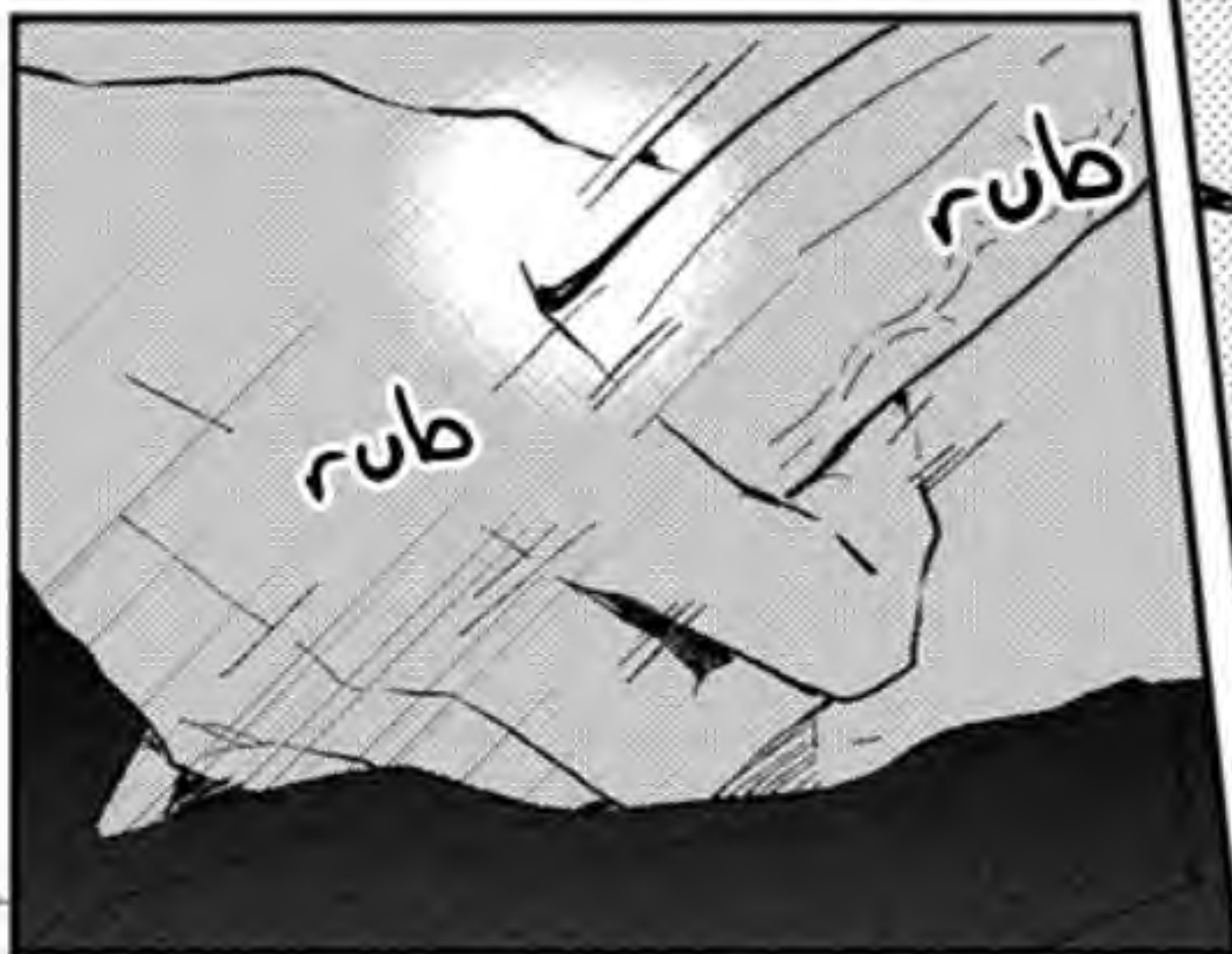


We're going
down the
wrong path.











AHH...!



... NNH.



KASUMI...



... I-,

IT...





homp
homp



TANK



pant

pant



NH...!

N... GH.

JOLT

pinch

pinch

SQUELCH

SQUELCH



PUSH



...!

YES...!

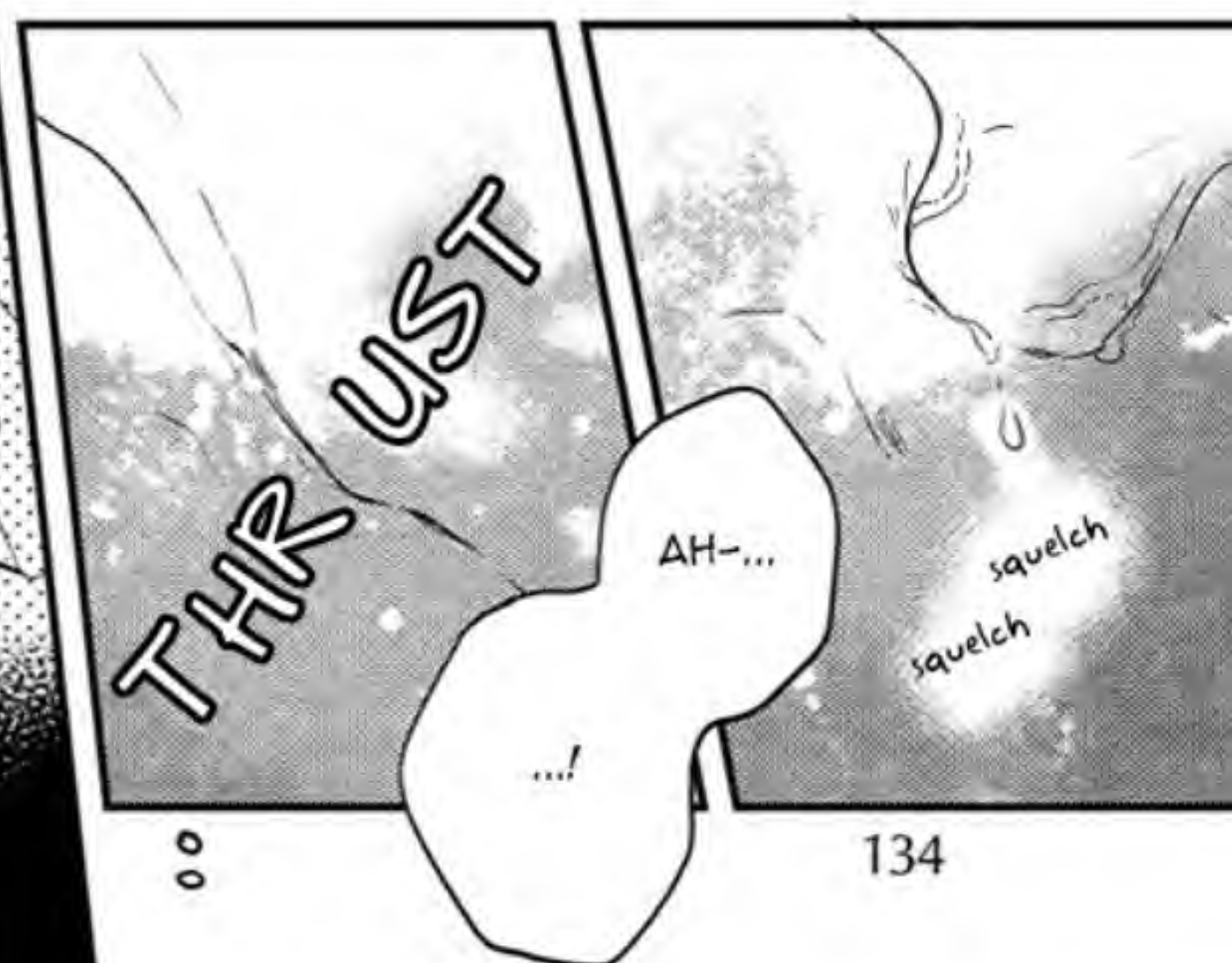
KASUMI...

I'M YOUR
FIRST MAN,
RIGHT...?

SQUELCH









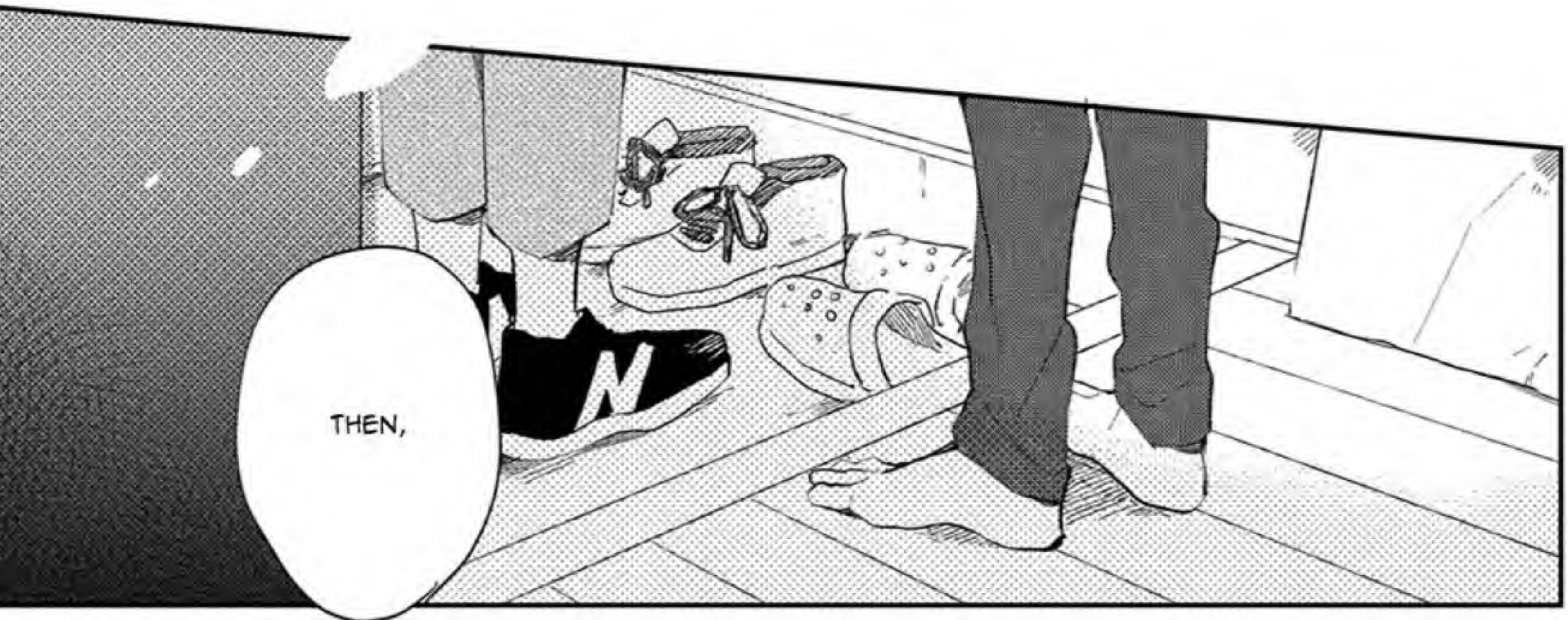


I wanted
to keep on
touching
him,

remain
like this—
kissing.

I felt an overwhelming amount of happiness...

...it was unreal.











I ENDED UP
WITH A PROJECT
THAT'S SMALLER
IN SCALE.

BUT
SHIMIZU-SAN
WAS *VERY*
DETERMINED
TO SWIPE IT.

MY TEAM
ALSO TRIED
NEGOTIATING
FOR IT,



OF COURSE,
YOU'LL BRING
IN RESULTS,
WON'T YOU?



AND NOT TO
MENTION, WHILE
KNOWING YOU'RE
SHOVING YOUR
SENIORS TO
THE SIDE...

SO KIDDO,
WITH YOUR
LITTLE DIRECTING
EXPERIENCE,







ARE YOU SURE
YOU ABOUT THIS?
CAN YOU REALLY
FOLLOW UP ON
YOUR WORD?

BUT
SHIINA-SAN,

Yes.
**THAT IS
VERY SOUND
REASONING.**

Not even a
word of
frustration?

I DON'T
SEE WHAT
THE POINT
IS,

BUT WHAT'S
IMPORTANT,
IS TO BE WELL
AWARE OF THE
CLIENT AND
THE WORK LAID
OUT IN FRONT
OF YOU.

KAWAI-SAN'S
DEAD SET ON
MAKING A RIVAL
OUT OF YOU.

U U



WITH THE
RIGHT
AMOUNT OF
EFFORT,

IN THE
RIGHT
PLACE,

IT'S A
HUGE
PROJECT,

SO IF
YOU DON'T
DELIVER...

**I WILL
DELIVER.**

**RESULTS
WILL SURELY
FOLLOW.**

WELL, I CAN'T
GET STARTED
UNLESS I
CONVINCE MY-
SELF I WILL.

That's

true



...my series of wrong choices.









INSTEAD OF INCORPORATING ALL FOUR INTO ONE DESIGN,

I WANTED TO SEE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE INTERIOR WAS ARRANGED AND TWEAKED PER SEASON, SO I MADE THE PROPOSAL.

THAT EXPLAINS WHY THERE'S A BAMBOO PLANT IN HERE.

Even when Tanabata is far off.

I REALLY DO...

...LOVE YOUR WORKS.

ILLUSTRATING IS HIS HOBBY,

SO I MADE GOOD USE OF IT.

Cuts the budget down

Oooh
THAT CAN ALSO HAPPEN, HUH?

The ones on the menu and on the napkins.

THE ILLUSTRATIONS ALSO ADD AN INTERESTING TWIST.

DID YOU DRAW THIS, TOO?

Ahh
THAT'S THE OWNER'S CREATION.

BE IT A STRONG OR GENTLE THEME,

THE MOOD IN YOUR DRAWINGS ALWAYS FITS THEM EXACTLY.

EVER SINCE BACK THEN,

I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT YOU WERE BRILLIANT AT INTERPRETING A THEME.









NAH, THE
WISHES
WRITTEN HERE
KEPT ME
OCCUPIED.



YEAH,
SORRY FOR
MAKING
YOU WAIT.

ARE YOU
ALL DONE?



THOSE ARE
CUSTOMERS'
WISHES.
YOU
CAN WRITE
ONE OVER
THERE.

I SAW.



YEAH,
THAT TIME,

THE RAINY
SEASON
HAD JUST
STARTED AND
THE HEAT WAS
TERRIBLE.



... HOW
NOSTALGIC.
DO YOU
REMEMBER?

IT WAS
AROUND THIS
SEASON WHEN
WE STARTED
GETTING
ALONG.



...what Kasumi wished for this time around.

KYOUSUKE,



I wonder...



... YEAH.



LET'S TAKE
A WALK BY
THE BAY.





... I
EXPECTED
NOTHING LESS
FROM THE
HOLY LAND OF
COUPLES.

THEY'RE
EVERYWHERE.



whoosh

whoosh



It'll be
unthinkable for
us to swear our
love for each
other.

our leisure
walks will
turn out a
spectacle.

Whenever
we're
together,

From
here on
out...



I WONDER
HOW WE
APPEAR TO
THEM.

...away from
the path to
"normalcy."

We've taken
a significant
shift...

HEY,

KYOUSUKE.





WHEN YOU SAID
YOU LOVED ME,
THAT WAS A LIE,
WASN'T IT?



LET'S STOP
SEEING EACH
OTHER.



YOU FELT
SORRY FOR ME,

SO YOU
DID IT OUT OF
SYMPATHY.





YOU'LL
ALWAYS BE
MY HERO.

BUT
YOU...



I TURNED A
BLIND EYE,

AND TOOK
ADVANTAGE
OF YOUR
KINDNESS.

I THOUGHT
THAT'D ALLOW
ME TO STAY BY
YOUR SIDE.

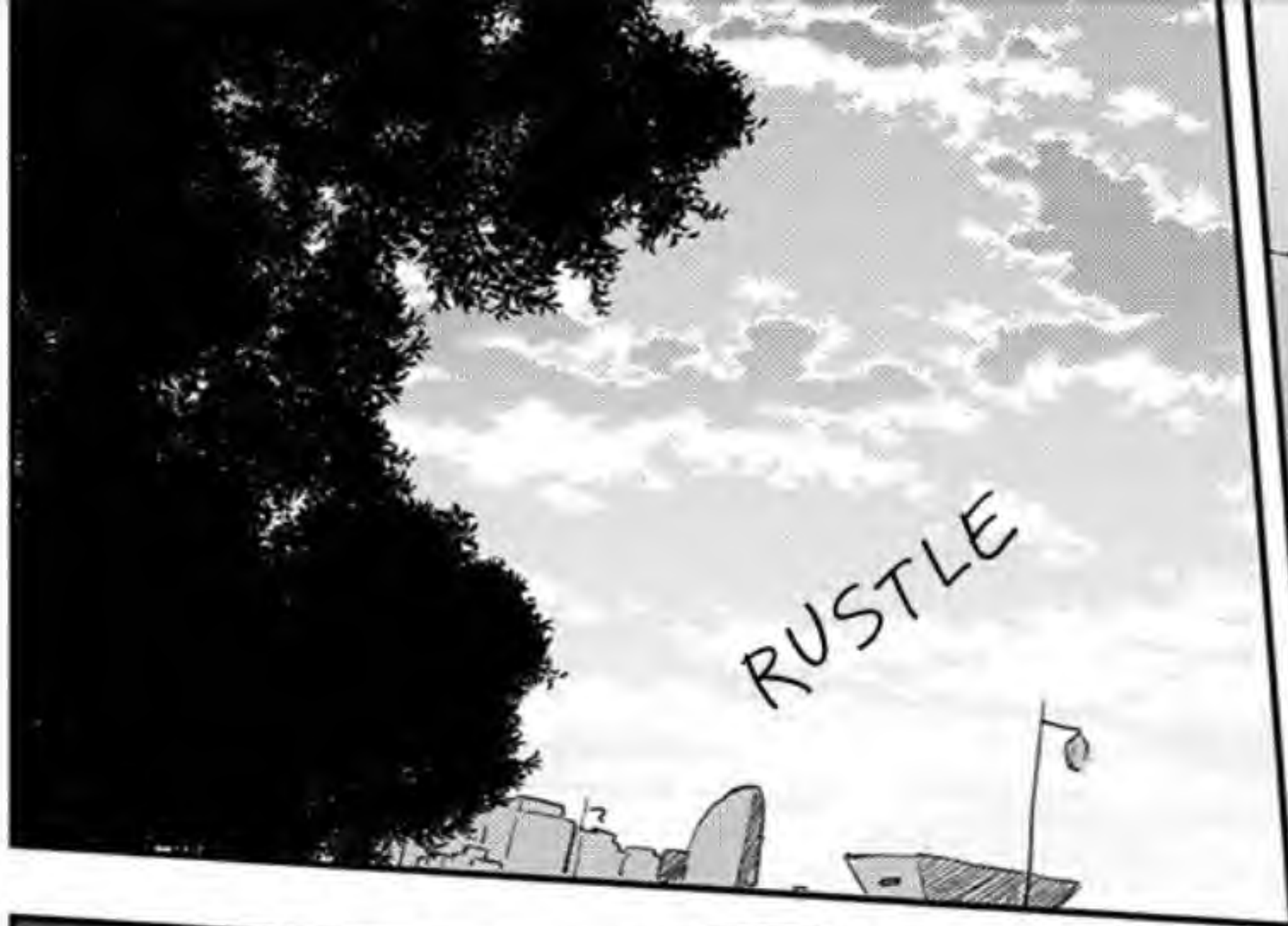


... I NEVER
WANT TO SEE
THAT PAINED
EXPRESSION
ON YOU...

You're wrong.

That's not
how I think of you...





RUSTLE



I'M
TAKING
YOUR
SILENCE...

FOR YOUR
ANSWER.



...!



I'LL BE FINE
ON MY OWN.

SORRY
FOR ALL
THE TIMES I
WORRIED
YOU.

turn



GOODBYE.

pass



THANK
YOU FOR
EVERYTHING.



IT'D BE
BETTER FOR
THE TWO OF
US...

IF WE
NEVER SAW
EACH OTHER
AGAIN.



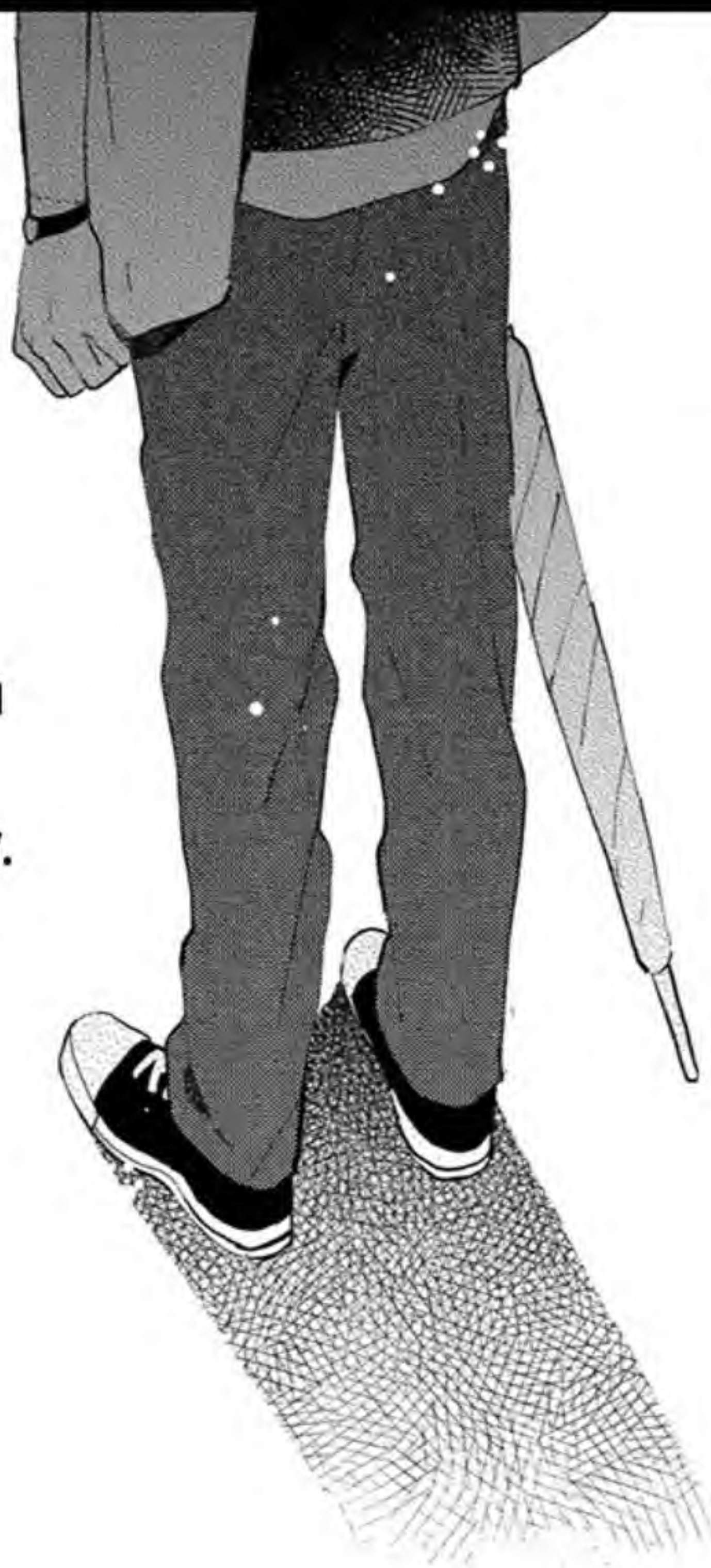
The day
we locked
bodies,

I decided I wanted to stay
with him even if it meant his
unhappiness.



BUT I'M A COWARD.

I could never
choose the path
that lead to
Kasumi's misery.



When
all's said
and done,

